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METRICAL MUSINGS

Henry Hammond

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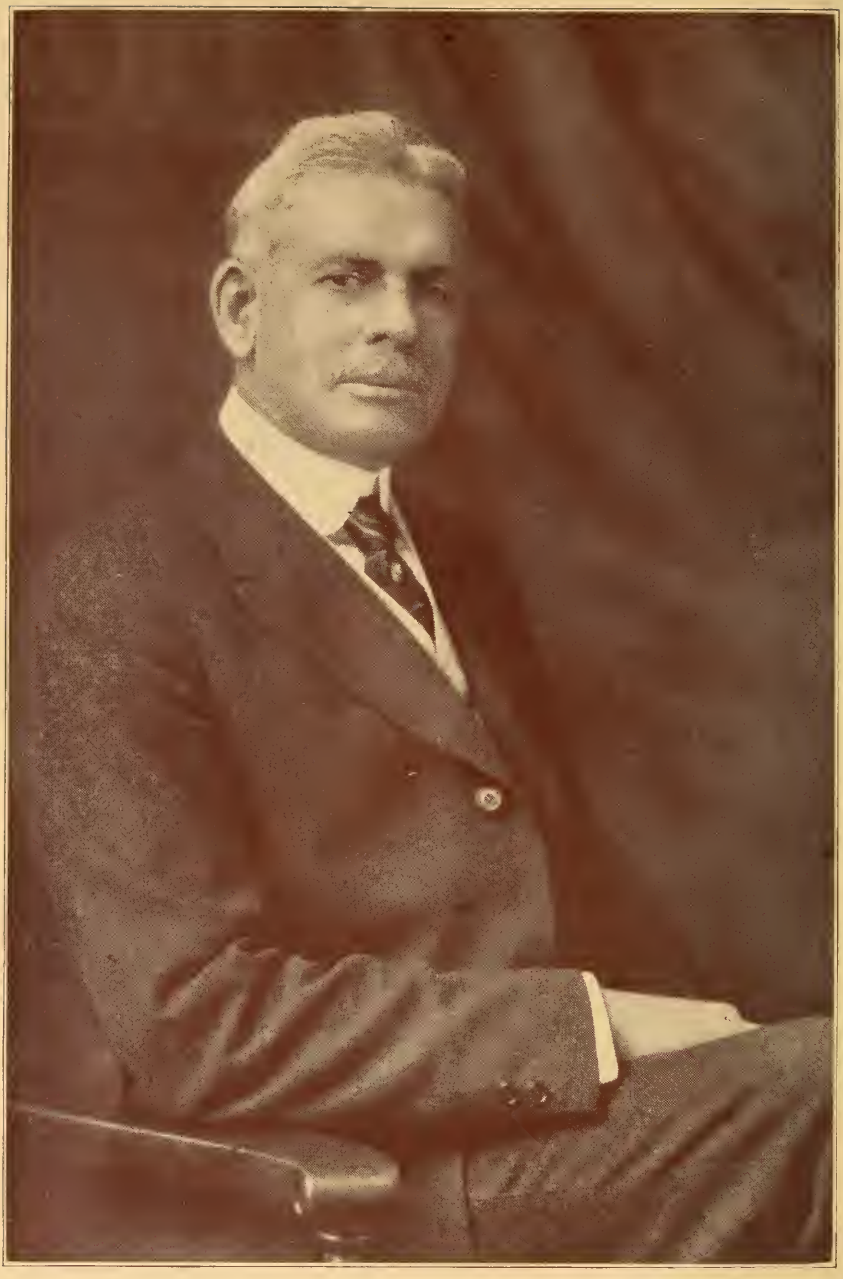

Herbert D. Hammond

SOME faces are so strong
We only will them to appear;
When lo, we see them
In our mental atmosphere.

Another face, like mine
Hath need of aid,
Lest it unnoted
From the memory fade.

In order to forestall
This denouement,
I've sung for you, my friend,
This little song.

METRICAL MUSINGS

BY

HERBERT HAMMOND

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No. 1.

THERE'S ONE who gives me all
I prize:
Just praise enough to make me wise;
Just cheer enough to make me glad;
Just sympathy when I am sad;
Just censure such as each one needs;
Forgiveness when he rightly pleads.
"Speaking" she often says, "of rhymes,
My husband writes good verse betimes."
Thus introduced, I now and then
Recite some product of my pen;
Encouraged by her friendly look
I've made for her this little book.
I wish that all her friends and mine
May find within its every line
Some token that may ever tend
To make this booklet seem a friend.
The inspiration of my life —
I give this toast to her:

My Wife.

METRICAL MUSINGS

DEDICATION.

TO him who, when the years have passed until
The generations that preceded him
Are gone, and only here and there is left
A face on which the lines of care are traced
More deeply than his own, can take mankind
Unto his arms and say: "Thou art my friend,"
I dedicate these lines.

And if, perchance,
A hurt in days agone have left a wound
That would not heal, I fain would have this prove
A balm to soothe the flesh and
Make it whole; but if this kindly
Wish I may not see, this much I do require,
That as between thy soul and mine no shadow
Of the past may come with ghostly hand
To emphasize thy fault or mine. The eye
Of youth looks onward and above;
And oftentimes in gaining vantage ground
The feet crush down with wanton disregard
The rights of weaker men; but when—the height
Achieved—the gaze is taken from before
And turned upon the path o'er which he came,
Then in its true perspective doth appear
Himself as others saw.

And what is life?
To have thy course marked out so sternly that
To falter is to lose thy life; to strive
With other men so tensely for the right
To breathe, that reason, sense and equity
Forgotten are; to fight with demons for
A crust of bread and failing, be assunder torn;
Or winning, to achieve the wherewithal
To satisfy thy need and hold in store
A surplus which thou can'st not use and yet
Thou wilt not yield to him who faints for lack
thereof

And with it all, to let no deadly blight
Possess thy soul.
To give of thy rich fullness
As the Lord hath prospered thee, and yet to prove
By gaining, notwithstanding these, thy gifts
That growth and acquisition not alone
Consistent are but indispensable
To life.
To take upon unwitting backs
The burdens which despairing parents
Nervelessly let fall, to be in turn
By us unloosed upon those waifs of fortune
Whom, 'tis said, the Lord hath sent to us.
To have, perchance, the dreams of youth come true:
Perchance in age, to dream them o'er again.
And yet to say and feel that it is good;
That pain and joy so strangely wed have been
As that at every crisis strength has come
To meet the need; to have a sweet hope born
That in some fairer clime, with ills removed,
The best in myriad souls will hold commune.

RHYMES.

IT doesn't take long to make a rhyme—
A pencil, a paper, a bit of time;
A thought or two that jingling, tell
Of an incident that pleased one well
Are all we need for a bit of verse,
To hand to a friend for better, for worse:
But Poetry! Now you have asked of me
A hint of the magic and mystery
That the angels knew, and that friendship feels,
When the joy of living, itself reveals;
When the heart is big with some tender thing
That crept in its depths and made it sing;
In short, when all of the joys we've had,
Are condensed in the thing that made us glad.
And I fear my friend that I cannot inspire
The strings of my tuneful but simple lyre
With something so great you will understand
That the holy ghost hath held my hand
And bade me sing such a plaintive tone
That my being shall mingle and merge with your own:
And yet, when I tell you I love you friend,
Can anything greater on earth portend?
Could I give to your hand a Midas touch,
Would I really, my friend, have done so much?

A POEM.

'TIS a wonderful thing, is a poem,
'Tis as subtle and vague as light;
The hands cannot more enfold it
Than compass a sunbeam bright;
You can tear it and rend it and break it,
Like the web from a spider's lair;
'Tis as soft and as weak and appealing
As the gold of your baby's hair;
It will lift up the soul out of sorrow,
With its wonderful strength so fine,
When a chain with its links of iron
Would break like a cord of twine;
And 'twill anchor the heart to virtue
A thousand fold more strong,
Than the words of boundless wisdom
From an uninspired tongue.
It needs so rhyming language,
This thought, with its breath of flame,
Except as the Master's canvas
Hath need of its golden frame;
And the soul that hath felt no poem,
Till its lowest depths were stirred,
Is poor, though the wealth of the Indies
On its clay hath been conferred.

FRIENDSHIPS.

I STOOD beneath the arches
  Of an old cathedral grand;
It was night, and dimly lighted
  Were the walls on either hand;
I had heard its jeweled windows
  Told the story sweet and olden
And the smile of God was brightened,
  Passing through their colors golden.
But I saw no wondrous beauty
  In the leaded lines of grey,
And a sense of disappointment
  Chilled me as I walked away.

But I stood there in the morning,
  When the sun with rays inspired,
Quickened every jeweled figure,
  Till my soul with zeal was fired.

And I said, "'Tis so with friendships,"
  Many a face when unillumed,
Is as bare of joy or promise
  As yon flower ere it bloomed,
But when lit with heaven's brightness,
  As its worth is better known,
It is radiant with a glory
  Coming straight from out the throne.

'Tis the same in form and feature,
  But today it thrills me through,
Where but yesterday its plainness
  Hid its glories from my view.

IMMORTALITY.

THE Sun through never ending ages changes not;
So fixed and so immovable, no simile is spared
To which its permanence may be compared;
The everlasting hills decayed were and forgot;
The stars which seem indeed to have a place,
Among the stable things the Maker planned,
Have yet their orbits, fixed by his almighty hand,
And travel on their trackless way through space.

And yet so strangely to our human sight appear
The wondrous works of God, that every day
The Sun doth seem to rise and shine and gently
pass away;
As though some king should make obeisance to a
peasant near:
And yet we know it is the Earth that moves away;
And that the Sun for other worlds is shedding light,
The while our eyes are softly closed by night,
And sleep benumbs us with the dying day.

I love to think the Soul is like the Sun,
That always has been and will ever be;
That changing worlds throughout eternity
Will pay their tribute to this peerless One;
And that in death the body, not the Soul,
Doth gently move away as moves the Earth;
As, having served the purpose of its birth,
The Soul is free to win its brighter goal.

BETROTHAL.

WHAT sings in babbling fountains
That sang not yesterday?
What rings in rocks and mountains
That rang not there alway?
What speaks in Christmas chimings
To thrill my soul anew?
What comes in gladsome rhymings?
What falls like heaven's dew?
What wand at midnight's hour
Unseals my sleeping eyes,
To ope' some fairy bower
Through which my pathway lies?
At night when sleep o'er takes me,
Joy waits my soul to bless;
And when the morn awakes me
I rise to happiness.
Oh thou, divinest treasure,
I did not dream such bliss
Would come in endless measure,
With thy bethrothal kiss;
I knew 'twas joy to love thee,
Thy favor sweet to earn,
But lost in giving to thee,
The joy of love's return.
But now I know in giving
Of all my life held dear,
I strangely was receiving
A thousand fold of cheer;
That giving was receiving;
That loss was boundless gain;
That all the joy of all the years,
And each exquisite pain,
Had wrought a crown of glory
That rested on my hair,
Like God's sweet benediction
Upon a holy prayer.

THE KING IS DEAD.

THE king is dead—long live the king!
The past holds no such precious thing
That we should pain or trouble borrow,
And fail to greet the bright tomorrow.

Because our golden yesterday
Was glad with blossoms sweet of May,
Shall we enjoy the fruit the less
That marks the Autumn's glad caress?

And if to us each closing door
But opes the way to something more;
If every added phase of life
With some new, throbbing joy is rife:

Will you believe when death shall come,
To still the lips,—the heart benumb,
There are no heights of grander weal
Eternity may yet reveal?

MARCH.

OH March, I do not like to hear
The solos that you sing;
They tell of frost, of Nature dead,
And many a kindred thing.

But when you sing a cheery bass,
And April, May and June
Supply the other parts, ah then
The harmony's in tune.

MY RAILROAD TICKET.

WHEN I travel to the city
And return again at night,
I am faced by a conductor,
Blue of coat, with buttons bright,
And from off my clean, new ticket,
With its numbers fifty-four,
Off he clips one little section,
Never less, and never more.
At the first I have so many
That I mind it not a bit,
And it seems that he will never
Clip the last one off of it,
But remorselessly and slowly
One by one they melt away,
And he takes my ticket wholly
On the month's concluding day.
Takes and drops it in his pocket,
And I know its life is o'er,
And I feel 'tis vain repining,
For I'll never see it more.

Thus I said, it is with living:
In our youth, three score and ten
Seems eternity expanded,
Yet, it is allotted men;
Time with slow and rhythmic motion,
Gathers in our early years;
If we could we e'en would hasten
Coming epochs fraught with tears.
But he takes them no more swiftly
That we wish them to be gone—
Simply lets eternal progress
In its car roll slowly on.

Underneath this car of progress
We are casting, day by day,
All our wealth of joys and jewels—
We've so much to give away.
Little think we then those jewels
Are the pearls that others lack;
That we would, if we could, forfeit
All our joys to bring them back.
Soon we grudge old time his tributes,
But he clips them, one by one,
Clips them slowly off and drops them
In his big oblivion,
Till the last one 'neath the sickle falls,
As fall it will and must,
And the soul goes to its Maker,
And the body to its dust.

A GOOD deed done is seldom great,
Unless 'tis born of others yet to come;
A thought expressed hath small effect on fate,
Unless 'tis born of thoughts that yet are dumb.

HOPE

JUST the knowing hope is dead,
Never more to lift its head,
Will kill the joys that still are left,
And leave the soul indeed bereft.

Just the chance peace may delay
Beyond the turning of the way,
Is all we need to nerve the arm,
And keep the heart's best impulse warm.

ACHIEVEMENT.

ACHIEVEMENT is a thing that all desire;
Youth knows no limitations to this fire;
He only understands 'tis fame that beckons,
And with such things as doubt he never reckons.

Maturer life blots out from off his page,
The useless verbiage of a tend'rer age;
Ambition then points not to *every* goal,
But to a *few* expressions of the soul.

Age comes to him, and with a kindly pall
It drops its benediction over all;
If then, one modest triumph crown the year,
'Tis no slight laurel that adorns his bier.

LIFE'S DEMANDS.

I DO not shrink from life's demands,
I take what heaven sends;
With burnished steel or clasp of hands
I greet my foes or friends,
And yet, somehow I pray that strife
May not go with me all through life.

If I could choose, I'd wish some day
That stormy seas and gales
Would sink to zephyrs soft as May
And gently fill my sails
And bear me to some haven kind
Where love and comfort I should find.

So, if my deeds of valor strong
In life's full, blazing noon,
Shall earn for me a tender song,
With joy and work in tune,
Then let me have these halo years
To mellow records fraught with tears.

And yet I know this prayer of mine
Is granted only to the few;
Not all may wear a halo's shine,
Not all forget the rue.
And so, I give my love to one
Who's found the haven named: "Well done."

AN ATOM OF TIME.

AN atom of time
Is a thing sublime,
For it holds in its fertile womb,
The marvelous plan
Of the life of man
From the cradle to the tomb.

An atom lost
Is a purpose crossed—
Is a thing that we failed to achieve,
And it tells in its scope
Of despair or hope
If the holder shall joy or grieve.

An atom is one
Of the things we've done,
And a million of these combined
Are condensed in the creed
Of a noble deed
In the purposes of mind.

If an atom hold
In its secret fold
A life in miniature;
If each day is a mine
Of jewels fine
If only the miner be sure;

If a month may bring
On its gilded wing
More joys than the heart can recite;
If a single year
With its hope and cheer
Is almost infinite;

If enduring fame
May reward the name
Of the man who was wise and strong;
If memory keep
In its spaces deep
His life through the ages long:

Can any one say
On this jeweled way,
With its three score years and ten
That life is short
In its vast import
Of good for the world of men?

Ah no! If life's term
Show a single germ
Which fruitful yet may be,
Then the barren year
Shall disappear,
And life is eternity.

THE moats that float within the air
Make visible the sunbeam there;
The darkness blotting out the sun
Reveals the stars when day is done;
Thus may my very weakness be
An interceding prayer for me.

BORROWED TIME.

DEATH sat him down by the busy way,
And watched the people as they passed;
He sat in the shadows gazing long
At the busy and all unconscious throng
But he touched a youth at last.

The young man paused with foot half raised,
And turned from his purpose bold;
He had never beheld the calm, sad face,
That looked on his from the darkened place:
But he knew without being told.

And he plead with a crushed and hopeless air:
"Oh Death, let me live till my work is done—
A few more days till the world is blest
With the fruit of my years and I sink to rest—
Not now, when 'tis just begun."

Death heard his prayer and stood aside
And bade him return to the busy way;
And the years were rich with the works achieved,
And the sorrow and pain that had been relieved,
Ere death came again, one day.

This time he said: "You were good to me,
Oh Death, with your sad but kindly ways;
You let me live when my heart was young,
And you waited until my song was sung—
Now take my remaining days."

But Death said: "Nay, not yet, my son:
I will lend you a few more spans of time,
And I pray that the works of the borrowed years,
With their burden of hopes and joys and fears,
May round out a life sublime."

And thus it befell that a blessing came,
In the trail of a youth grown old,
And the world learned how, in this borrowed time,
To turn its prose to a joyous rhyme,
Ere that heart in death was cold.

WHEN losses come
If only love remain,
Then is the bankrupt
Truly rich again.

THREE LIVES.

THE snow upon the mountain crest
Is like the heart that will not yield,
But keeps its sweetness in itself concealed,
Nor hears the heart throbs in a troubled breast.

Some snow, secure in sheltered nooks,
Is cold until midsummer days
Have wooed it in their myriad, artful ways
To slake the thirst of failing valley brooks.

But some snow in exalted peaks
Yields never to life-giving streams;
Embalmed and pure and beautiful it seems,
And yet, 'tis death not life, of which it speaks.

I WISH for each one
That which he would have,
But ere he shall achieve it
I would purge his will
Till he will welcome
Whatsoe'er may come.

AMERICA.

MY Country 'tis of thee,
Thou land that sheltered me,
Of thee I sing.
Land where the men are brave;
Land where the women crave
With them, all good to save,
And worth, make king.

My Country here I bring,
My richest offering:
My love for thee.
Nursed at thy mother breast,
All that was strong and best,
Came as our joint behest;
The family.

In thine escutcheon bright,
Lighting the darkest night
'Neath Heaven's dome;
Where men and women bide
United—side by side
Whate'er on Earth betide
I see the home.

Thus may our trials end,
And every discord blend
In harmony;
May every heart throb feel
Pride in the common weal;
And fix on hope the seal
Of liberty.

MY PRAYER.

I.

YESTERDAY.

I THANK those gods that have my soul in care,
For that sweet joy that yesterday I knew;
That filled my heart so full, there was no room
For tears, and hence they overflowed my eyes,
And filled me with a mute and glad surprise.

II.

TODAY.

I pray today that some sweet, thobbing germ
May quickened be within my inmost heart,
That yesterday was latent in its depths,
Awaiting just the meed of sun and air
That came to it today and made it live.

III.

TOMORROW.

I pray that from the mystery of this day,
Some purpose may find lodgment in my soul,
To bring a blessing with tomorrow's sun;
To fill some void that otherwise might ache;
To make me give or get, a joy worth while.

IV.

ALWAYS.

And so, I'd have each new and vital day,
Resplendent with this blessed trinity:
The joys I had and have and hope to gain,
I'd have them give me strength to make my woes
Be subject rather than coerce my will.

A YOUTH.

OH, I have seen a massive bridge of steel,
So strong it seemed to bear with greatest ease
The heavy loads that daily tried its strength;
And yet a master mind, its girders strong
Had tested and had found
That sometime in the future years
It would become inadequate to bear
The strain of burdens that he saw,
Instead of less, must much augmented be.
And so he gravely laid his plans
To strengthen and renew each brace and beam;
And in the course perhaps of many years,
The while the pulse of commerce surged
And throbbed with never ceasing strain,
There came to be another bridge so strong,
That centuries, it seemed, must come and go,
Ere it should reach the limit of its powers.

And then I saw a youth, so wondrous strong
That every added burden but enlarged
The power he had to bear their heavy weight;
And yet the eye of God had spanned the years
And seen that when his youth was gone
A structure must supply its place
To bear the weight of later years;
To bear the burdens which the saddened ones,
Should lay upon its quiv'ring steel,
Unmindful of the ruin that would come
If it but prove unequal to the strain;
And adding more as each successive load
Was safely borne.
And thus as year by year youth passed away,
And strength of hand had changed to strength of soul,
Unconscious to himself there came
The grace and strength which in his later years,
Should bridge the gulf between himself and God.

IOWA.

OH Iowa, dear Iowa!
I did not know that I could love thee so.
I knew my infant eyes
First looked upon thy prairies green;
I knew my father's sturdy soul
And strenuous resolve,
Had buffeted thy rugged storms
And chilly blasts;
I knew that year by year
In spite of adverse fate
Our family tree had put its
Branches to the sun
And thrived where weaker shrubs
Had been o'er thrown.
Deep rooted in New England's
Granite hills,
The tree that reared itself
Above thy soil
Had schooled itself to thrive
When skies were fair;
To let its sap be drawn
By tempting suns,
And then to shield itself
From winter's cold.
I did not know that love
In such a cradle lay,
I rather felt we lived
In spite of love,
And tenderness, if it was felt,
Was put away.
But now I see thee
Through a mist of years,
In words I name
Another land my home,

And yet the tears that have
Refused to flow
Spring to my eyes unbidden
When I think of thee.
And thus I know that memory
Is life,
And that what seemeth life
Is but the years
When blood is young and limbs are strong,
And man too burdened is with lusty deeds,
To note the time when memory is born;
To note its growth until it dominates the soul
And makes him know that herein lies eternal life.

REFLECTIONS.

I STOOD by the shore of a mighty sea,
Where the waves with crushing sweep,
Came rolling in with an angry roar,
From the bosom of the deep.
So vast its power, my heart stood still,
As I watched the giant's play,
And I said to myself, can puny hands
This restless torrent stay?
But my query was answered ere 'twas spoke,
For the place whereon I stood
Was a pond'rous pier, set deep in earth,
Of iron and stone and wood.
For years it had said to the angry tide,
As it seethed and foamed and swayed,
Thus far may'st thou go, and here for aye,
Must thy proud waves be stayed.
There were times when the Sun was mild and warm,
And the winds to a zephyr sank,
When the rippling waters laved its sides,
As though for its shade to thank,
When they said to the pier, why stand so firm,
So somber, so silent, so wide,
When in and out through thy columns strong,
My ripples but seek to hide?
Why may we not have they friendship true,
Why ne'er a kind word do we hear,
Though side by side our happy lives,
Have glided for many a year?
A moment of silent dignity,
Then spake the somber pier,
"Thy words but fall on vacant ears,
They wake nor smile nor tear,
For well I know their tones for me,
Have only a pleasant sound,
When the Sun shines bright, and the mighty winds,

In mightier chains are bound;
That e'en while thy happy face today
Would win an answering smile,
Thy treacherous eye takes careful note
Of a weakening spot the while;
So go thy way, and whether for me
Thy smiles or thy frowns shall come,
Henceforth and forever, false friend to thee,
My voice shall the same, be dumb."
How many a heart to the world must show
This hard, unrelenting phase,
When his heart is consumed with the burning wish
For the light of a friendly gaze!
How many must stand, as the pier to the sea,
By friend or by foe, unimpressed,
Shutting out from the heart all the blessed delights,
Of sympathy, heaven and rest!
Oh God, send affliction, send sorrow, send pain,
Withhold other joys from my heart,
But grant that my poor human nature, from love
And from sympathy never may part!

THE FEARFUL MAN.

I KNOW a man of much renown;
He's lived for years about the town;
His heart is sometimes buoyed with hope
But often he's a misanthrope.
He's sipped some honey as he flew
From rustic blossoms wet with dew;
And yet his retrospective view
Sees much of good he failed to do;
Unlike the old man in "Lucile"
Who owned, regrets he did not feel
Because forsooth in search of pelf,
He'd lost no chance to please himself.
This man, if weal or woe betide
Though pleased is not yet satisfied;
He makes me have a sense of fear
Of danger that may hover near
While I have little time to sigh
For noting ill luck passing by
I laugh if pain's demands are stayed
And hunger's wants with food allayed;
He's fearful least the pain return
And appetite again shall burn.
I fain would have his life made dear
By driving out these imps of fear;
I'd have him live today in gladness
Unmindful of tomorrow's sadness;
I'd plant in him a bit of leaven
To give to life a touch of heaven.
And having made his life complete
I'd have him make the world more sweet;
To care for him I'd fain not seem
Because I make this man my theme;
I only wish that all mankind
Might put misfortune out of mind,
And magnify the things of sense
That bring a joyful recompense.

LIFE.

I LOOKED upon a child asleep in bed;
A billion men that are alive, and thrice as many dead,
Have scarce sufficed to make a world, I said.
Yet this dear life contained a principle so true,
That ere its precious sands had all run through,
The world so old had found a blessing that was new.

I looked upon a field in winter time,
Snow mantled, icebound, yet it seemed sublime,
It seemed so dead I could not hear its pulses rhyme,
And yet I knew that life was wildly throbbing there,
And with the early springtime's gentle prayer
'Twould wake in rich profusion to perfection rare.

I looked upon the Earth and even in its strife
Its end and aim and perpetuity was life,
And e'en in death the wish to live again was rife,
And then I looked upon the stars and thought,
That man hath learned his lesson poorly who hath taught
Our world alone and not the Universe with life is fraught.

And then I looked upon the soul the fountain of it all,
I saw it anchored to the Earth in Adam's fall,
And yet as some high steeple with its spire tall
Can pierce the clouds above our mortal sight
So God, I thought, with his unfettered might
Could give immortal souls eternal light.

HABIT.

A CHILD at play, with happy, bounding heart,
A cheerful fire enkindled at her feet;
The little tongues of flame with rainbow hues,
With rosy tints enflamed her features sweet;
And drawing near, to feel its genial breath,
Her soul, it seemed, as well as body, warming,
Her mind was full of fancies passing fair,
And each one than the other seemed more charming:
But suddenly the child arose in wild alarm,
For seizing on her garments, quick the flame
Engulfed her form within its cruel grasp,
And burned the life from out the little frame.

I have another child in mind,
A child, who yet to years mature has grown;
Another fire this older child enkindled,
As though she of the first had never known.
She too enjoyed the pleasant light and warmth,
Until she felt its soul-consuming pain,
And then she said, "Thou wicked, cruel fire,
Return, I bid, from whence thou came, again!"

But laughing in its glee, the flame replied,
"Until thou gav'st me life, I quiet lay,
Unconscious of my power, thy humble slave,
Content my latent life to sleep away;
But now I know how grand a thing is life,
And feel resistless strength within my arms,
And if thou bind me not with iron chains,
I'll boast my powers, not caring whom it harms;

Henceforth I *may* not dominate thy life,
But if thy strength no greater be than mine,
I'll burn and bend and twist and warp thy soul,
Till thou would'st hardly know that it was thine,
And should'st thou weaker grow with constant strife,
And I with constant strife should strengthened be,
It may be there will come a time
When thou shalt feel thyself consumed by me."

TO THE REALIST.

I WISH that when your gold and base alloys,
Shall lure you with their sordid yellow charms,
That when you grasp their seeming stable joys,
They'll turn to golden dreams within your arms.

TO THE IDEALIST.

I wish that life may hang before your eyes,
Sweet pictures telling all the heart should feel,
And when you touch their seeming painted skies,
You'll start with pleasure when you find them real.

I SAW THE BABY WAKE.

I SAW the baby wake this morn,
From out of the wonderland,
And I heard the sound of the flying feet
Of the vanishing brownie band.

And I saw the print of a fairy kiss,
Ere it faded from off his lips,
And I fancied he reached for the shadowy form,
With his spreading finger tips.

And I wiped from his quivering eye a tear,
That spoke with its message dumb,
A word for the troubles of yesterday,
And a promise of more to come.

And I hoped from the muttered word that fell,
He would tell of the pony teams,
And the queer little beings and wonderful things,
That had peopled the baby's dreams.

But the border was crossed from that beauty world,
And he'd guarded its secrets well,
And I yearned to know what the baby knew,
But knowing would never tell.

And I kissed from his lips a smile so sweet,
It warmed my heart all day,
And every one marveled but could not guess,
What had driven my cares away.

I saw the baby wake this morn,
And I knew he had been to see,
A wonderful, beautiful, sinless world,
And had brought back its treasures to me.

MY BABY.

'TWAS my baby, my fair haired darling,
And his spirit fled away,
From between my arms and left them
Enclosing his lifeless clay.

He was strong limbed, light hearted and sunny,
And I hoped when my summons should come,
That my baby's strong arms would surround me,
As death should my senses benumb.

For he was not a baby, my darling,
To any one else but me,
But his first and his last smile, so winning,
Were the same for my eyes to see.

When I caught the first sweet, lisping accents,
That fell from his baby tongue,
Or soothed him to peaceful slumber
With the lullaby songs I sung

He was not more truly my baby,
Than he was when the hand of death,
With its still and its icy fingers,
Set its seal on my baby's breath.

Oh Father! can time ever soften,
The sorrow my heart doth know?
Can solace for grief overwhelming,
From out of thy fountains flow?

Will the sound of the angel's voices,
As their echoes shall come to me,
Will the light of the Lamb transcendent,
As his glory henceforth I see,

Have a new and a sweeter meaning,
  Since I know that my baby's voice
Has a part in the song and sunshine,
  And would bid my soul rejoice?

Oh! surely, the hope within me
  Tells true when it whispers, sweet,
That somewhere, around above me,
  He waits for my coming feet.

That some time I'll get back my baby,
  Some time, in the shadows dim,
I'll sleep till the angels call me,
  To waken in joy with him.

WHY DO I LOVE YOU?

WHY do I love you dear? I cannot tell.
I only know that when some deep emotion,
Stirs to its depth my soul's devotion;
And when the tears that spring unto my eyes
Are answered by your own in glad surprise,
And when for joy my laughter bold outslips,
And yours responsive ripples from your lips,
'Tis then I know indeed I love you well.

Why do I love you dear? Why need you know?
If I could tell in coldest calculation,
The cause and the degree of my elation,
If I should tell in burning words my bliss,
Withholding meanwhile from your lips my kiss
Or if you knew by sines and logarithms,
Just how to measure all my paroxysms,
I doubt you would believe I love you so.

Why do I love you dear? Well, if I must, I'll say
You charm my senses, even as my soul,
You offer meat and then the flowing bowl,
And when my verses turn abrupt to prose,
You love me just the same for all my woes,
You waken all the best that in me lies,
But Oh! I love your hair, your lips, your eyes,
Till life seems just a careless gladsome day.

Why do I love you dear? perhaps it is because
That when I'm with you other people seem
Created for a foil to you, my dream,
And when you're absent like a gem you shine,
And others like the setting are that prove you mine
And, like a gem, you take the best from all,
To let its soft refulgence on me fall,
My peerless gem in which I find no flaws.

TRANSFIGURATION.

THE glory of some magic spell
With peace transfigured me;
My outward look seemed just the same
Yet inward was a sacred flame,
That burned in ecstacy.

An impulse that I could not see,
And yet I knew was real,
Went surging through my senses' mind,
Like harp bewitched with summer's wind,
And left a joy ideal.

And then it passed and I awoke,
To know some blessed dream
Had overflowed my soul as land
Is covered by a fertile sand,
From some gorged mountain stream.

And yet it was not quite a dream—
A sweet dissolving view—
For etched upon my heart I found
A face that made my pulse to bound,
An image dear of you.

THE GIRL THAT I LOVE.

THE girl that I love is not the girl
Whom I praise with song and lute,
For my voice is dumb
And my heart is numb,
When I stand in her presence, mute.

When I come before this girl I love,
The tears come in my eyes.
By the touch of my hand
She must understand,
The words that my tongue denies.

Oh girl that I love! Oh charming girl!
Can you read what my heart would say?
Or will you refuse
My voiceless muse,
As I plead for your love today?

How changed is the scene with my other girl!
There all of my powers combine,
And my love is made bold,
As its depths I unfold,
And my being with hers I entwine.

She makes me to say—this other girl,
The words I am like to regret,
But the charm of her lip
I'm so tempted to sip,
I'm inclined what I say, to forget.

So treasure of mine—which place will you choose?
I will give you your choice—don't you see?
But before you decide,
Let me sweetly confide,
That you're both of these girls to me.

APRIL.

"GOOD morning sweet April,
So winsome and shy,
With a smile on your lip,
And a tear in your eye.

There are dainty hepaticas
Hid in your hair,
And bonnie blue violets
Clustering there."

We smile as we greet you,
Yet make it a rule,
To never believe you:
Our sweet "April fool."

The flowers peep up
Through the chill of the ground,
Then say: "April fool,"
When they cannot be found.

Still there's something about you,
Your sunshine and showers,
That makes us believe
You will bring us May flowers.

So we drink to your health
In the rain and the dew,
And we love you and bless you,
However untrue.

For there's something in weeping,
In laughter, in sin,
Which, wrought into life,
Makes the whole world akin.

A THOUGHT.

A LITTLE bird in my office flew
And turned my thoughts from their mood of blue;
And he sang a startled note of cheer,
As if to say: "Do you always live here!
And are musty books and gloomy views
All that compensate you for the grass and dews
And skies and trees and limitless air,
That render my life a thing so fair?"

Then out he flew, as in he had come,
While I in my wond'ring surprise was dumb.
But I found he had left, ere he flew away,
A balm for the blues that I had that day;
And I thought: If his life of a day shall end,
With no other word of sweet portend
I will bless him because he brought to me
A glimpse of the blue of sky and sea;
That he turned my thoughts from the musty books,
To the ripple and murmur of running brooks,
So that ever from then was my desk more fair,
For the thought of the bird that had nestled there.

THE COUNTRY.

WHEN the strands of my hair are loosened
And it tumbles about my head;
When the iron band around my brain,
And even that old, annoying pain,
From my mind for the time have fled;

When the lock on the door is useless,
And its portals are free to all;
When the fear that has shadowed my daily life,
That I might fail in my earthly strife,
Is gone, like the leaves in the Fall;

When the faces I meet are familiar,
And each hath a pleasant word,
And I know if I e'er in my life did wrong,
'Tis blended in memory's beautiful song,
And my eyes with a mist are blurred;

When the river invites with its freshness,
And I bathe in its waters clear,
And I throw myself down 'neath the trees in the glade,
And rest in the cool of their exquisite shade,
Nor think of an evil or fear:

Ah, 'tis then I am sure that the Country,
Hath wrought upon me its spell,
And the hum of the City's remorseless strain,
That hath worked on my soul and my spirit and brain,
Is gone, and I feel all is well.

WHAT IS SO RARE AS A DAY IN JUNE?

WHAT is so rare as a day in June,
With the world aglow and the heart in tune.
For the words of love that are coming soon,
Under the sheen of the summer moon,
Oh June!

What is so rare as a day in June?
Well, speaking of days—*'tis* beyond compare.
If you ask for something that is more fair
And precious and charming as well as rare,
Oh June!

I think that more rare than a day in June,
Is the soul that discovered that June was rare;
Is the maid that induced the balmy air,
From Winter's cold to the poet's lair,
Oh June!

And then more rare than a day in June
Is the maid who has promised her love will abide,
That whatever of weal or of woe may betide,
Shall not weaken the pledge of the June made bride,
Oh June!

A LOVE SO TRUE.

THERE'S a love so true
It encompasses you;
It has no sex
With its troubles that vex;
It has no age
With its wisdom sage;
It has no youth
With its sad untruth;
No middle life
With its problems rife;
No later trend
When the trials end;
No ultimate haven—
(Life's records graven.)
Where the very old
Have found a fold.
Just a flood of joyous memories,
That speaks to my heart of all of these;
Just a composite love of tender graces
Made up of all of life's dear faces;
And all of the years of life have tongue
In this glad new love whose praise I've sung.

MY LITTLE GIRL.

MY little girl is happy all day long;
From morn till night I hear her precious song;
She calls her dolls by quaint and tender names,
And these, her friends, are partners in her games.

To papa, mamma, auntie, maid and friends,
Some sweet, familiar, loving name she lends,
And I look on with kind, complacent eyes,
And sigh, through smiles, that years will make her wise.

And then I turn and enter that dear room,
Where all the beauteous flowers of mem'ry bloom;
And like the child, each joy that I have owned,
In some sweet, mem'ry doll has been enthroned.

How great the child when thus esteemed, appears!
How time can bridge the intervening years,
Until I learn each child that glads me so,
Is but a man mature, in embryo.

TWO VALENTINES.

DR. Jekyl, Mr. Hyde,
Everywhere do you abide!
Angel thoughts and deeds of devils,
Gravitate to common levels;
Roses spring from dust of Earth;
Joy and pain have common birth;
Many a baby's flutt'ring breath
Bringeth to the mother, death.

Yesterday the postman's call
Brought two letters, that was all;
Quick, from one I tore the cover,
For I saw 'twas from my lover;
Though it was not signed, I knew
None but he could thrill me through;
Tender words of love divine
Told me true that he was mine.

Then I turned, a happy woman,
To the words of evil omen,
That the other message told,
With its rhymings rude and bold;
And the gaudy slave of hate,
Made my glad heart desolate;
Each had left its mark and sign;
Each was called a valentine.

VALENTINES.

TO love you dear is just to let my soul
Drink to its surfeit from the flowing bowl;
To let each holy thought that in me lies,
Exalt my being to the very skies;
To start from sleep, by some sweet impulse torn,
That could not wait for being till the morn;
To give, perchance, some blessedness to you,
That wakened in your heart a feeling new;
To feel a power, inspired of my desire,
To light within your soul a sacred fire;
To know when I with years my life resign,
You'll be what you are now,
My Valentine.

A THIEF stole into my heart, one day,
And he said: "I will carry these treasures
away;
Purposes grand and gems of thought,
And priceless things that for years I've sought."
But strangely, the theft of the things he gained,
But doubled the number of what remained,
So he said: "'twill not pay me to run and hide—
We shall both be the gainers to here abide;
Of all of my victims, there's none like this one,
So I think I'll stay with him and be his son."

TWENTY YEARS OLD TODAY.

TWENTY years old today, little maiden;
Twenty years old today;
Memory laughs as I softly unfurl
The quaint baby dress
Which I tenderly bless
And tearfully lay away.

Gone are the beautiful 'teens with tears;
Gone are the beautiful 'teens;
Memory takes the care-free years,
And garlands their Mays
In her beautiful ways,
With her yellows and reds and greens.

Rent is the future's mysterious veil
When youth, with impatient tread,
Takes boldly and fearless the unknown trail,
Unmindful if weal
Or pain it reveal,
Intent on the view ahead.

Doing anew what the world has done,
And will do till time is no more;
Choosing to win as their father's won;
Scoffing advice,
With its words of ice,
And cheerfully paying the score.

A GRAIN of musk if on the casement laid,
'Tis said will fill a room with perfume rare;
And if, in after years the grain is weighed,
No scale can tell that it hath lost a part,
Because of what went off into the air.

And thus it seems with you, sweet maiden fair;
The smiles, the words, the gentle tokens kind,
That radiate from eyes and lips and hair,
Seem not to take away a feather's weight
Of loveliness, from what is left behind.

I DID not miss you so sorely,
At first, when you went away;
For somehow I felt you were hiding,
Or just in the next room were gliding,
And so in my heart you held sway.

I did not quite sense it, my blessing,
The change that had really come;
For my retina cherished your picture,
And softened the painful heart stricture,
And cheered with its message dumb.

But the image has tenderly faded;
A shadow is on the sky;
Your step and your voice are not near me;
I call but your ear cannot hear me;
And so, little girl, goodbye.

YOUTH.

DAY of youth and grace and gladness,
Sprinkled with a touch of sadness;
Yet a miracle so precious,
Joy confined is in its meshes.
Every day in some slight measure
Slips away this golden treasure;
Every hour the tender maiden
With a feather's weight is laden.
Till in ripe futurity
Come the blessings of maturity;
As to you shall come these changes,
May the scope of life's broad ranges,
As its purposes unfurl,
Hold the sweetness of the girl,
Link those charms divinely human
To the glories of the woman,
And when life with joy hath crowned thee,
Make thee know my wish hath found thee.

HE—SHE—I

He

WHAT made her resent ere I could repent
The words that were thoughtlessly said?
For I'll never retract the impetuous act,
Though it strike down her love for me dead.

She

Oh what made him say in that cruel way
The words I can never forgive?
And what made him kill with remorseless will
When he taught me to want to live?

I

What made them abide in their foolish pride,
Just to learn, when their hair was gray,
It might all have been spared had either one dared
To be brave enough to give way.

THANATOS.

SOFTLY I slip within my narrow house;
Its quietness is peace profound to me,
Its darkness welcome after glare of day;
Its lonesomeness affords me quiet peace;
I do not even mind its breathlessness;
I have no hunger, hence I need not strive;
I cannot move so need no larger space;
No friend awakes my sorrow for his woes,
No enemy can reach me with his ills;
My shroud I'll never change, nor have renewed.
I seem to have all tests for happiness,
And yet I'm burdened with a strange unrest:
I heard the mourning ere the door was closed,
I saw my friends turn sadly back to earth,
Yet soon, I heard the quiet sounds of mirth—
Life, struggling for supremacy o'er death,
Until a single mourner vigil kept;
Life had forgot I ever shared its joys,
And I, content, sank to oblivion's shade,
And knew the peace I had not known before.

SEEK THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

GOOD MASTER, wilt Thou kindly tell me where
I may secure this pearl of greatest price?
Thy first command I have in haste obeyed,
To sell my other goods and seek the pearl
Of greatest price, and this one having found
I fain would call it mine; but Master dear,
The pearl I do not find. Day after day
I've sought unceasingly: within the crowns
Of Kings, and down in deepest mines, and then
I've thought: "Perhaps some humble setting holds
This pearl of greatest price," and so I've sought
In humble places here and there, but all
In vain has been my careful search, and so
Dear Master, prone I fall before Thy face
And pray that Thou wilt guide me to my aim.

The Master spake in gentleness and love:
"Dear son, thou hast indeed obeyed. The treasure
Which thou hast achieved by sale of other
Pearls, is rich, and yet does not excel
That pearl of greatest price, and glad I am
That I may tell you where it may be found.
Just let the scales fall from your blinded eyes,
It's brightness then will dazzle you; so near
It lies, your outstretched hand could hold it firm;
Sometimes beneath your feet it lies, sometimes
Above your head—so near your anxious eye,
Bent on some distant view, fails to discern
The thing you seek because 'tis focused wrong.
But you *will* see, and when the light shall come
The glory of the Lord will 'round thee shine
And fill thee with a peace and joy divine."

A PRAYER.

DEAR LORD, I do not lift the prayer to Thee,
"Remove the burdens that have weighted me!"
I do not ask that to my form so bowed,
The straightness of my youth shall be allowed;
I do not e'en repine at any ill,
Since with it came the strength to do thy will.
So sweetly was Thy hand upon me laid,
It terrified me not nor made afraid,
But gently as an added flake of snow,
Each trial found me meet for weal or woe.
And now to take away the load I bear,
That I have learned contentedly to wear,
Would be to straighten Pisa's leaning tower
And thus disclose the secret of its power;
Would be to cut the hair of Samson, when
His strength would thus be made like other men.
Ah, no! My heart hath wrapped its tendrils round
The chains by which it seemeth to be bound,
Until to tear them out would be to spill
The life blood which my throbbing pulses fill.
My bending back hath found the best incline
To fit the load that ever must be mine,
Until so blessed hath it come to be
I would not from its soothing pain be free.
If one sweet wish might be vouchsafed to me,
I think that I would wish to see
This burden fitted to the back of him
Whom most I'll love when eyes with age grow dim;
No legacy which could of death be born
Would grace him like life's burden fitly worn.

A PRAYER.

I WOULD lean upon thy promise,
When the Sun is gone;
Trusting Thee to guide my footsteps,
Till the morn shall dawn.

Refrain

Lead me by still waters,
Let me never want;
Make me in green pastures to abide,
In Death's vale and shadow;
Let me fear no evil,
With Thy rod and staff to guide.

I would lean upon Thy promise,
In the morning light;
Often when the Sun is shining,
In my soul 'tis night.

Every day I need Thy blessing,
Be it rough or fair;
When I'm strong, I need Thy guidance,
When I'm weak, Thy care.

MY SISTER.

DOWN the gentle incline she wandered,
Mid flowers and leaflets of green,
And peeping through spaces between them,
The sun lent his light to the scene;
And down, though her footsteps were tending,
Yet back o'er her shoulder she threw,
A smile that was just like her nature,
So open and wholesome and true;
And but that I knew, I'd say surely,
That down at the end of her way,
Was a bower of roses and beauty,
With fairies to own to her sway.
But 'twas down in the valley of shadows,
Her footsteps were tending that day,
And the boatman was waiting to bear her,
Across in the shadows gray;
And not till I saw her returning,
With the same gentle smile on her face,
Did I know if the Master would keep her,
Or let her come back to her place.

HOPE.

THE sun went down in the ocean wave
And I said: He hath found a watery grave;
Then darkness fell o'er the drowned sun
And the waves even mourned for what they had done,
For the light of the world was gone.

But the morning came and the day was crowned
By the self same sun that I knew was drowned;
And the darkness I thought would ever remain
Had fled away from the earth again,
And I saw that the light had come.

The light of hope went out and I said
That peace and joy from my life had fled;
Then darkness fell and I prayed that death
As my hope was gone would still my breath,
But my palsied heart lived on.

And I lighted the darkened lamp again,
For I could not abide the ache and pain,
And a feeling of peace with returning light
Crept into my heart and made it bright,
And I took up my life again.

THE BUSY CHILD.

I'VE got to be there when the sun shall rise,
To roll back the clouds out of sight;
And I've got to pick up all the bright little stars,
To keep for another night.

And I've got twenty bushels of dew drops to dry,
And to wake up the dear little lark;
And to turn on the light, so the jolly old Sun,
May not lose his way in the dark.

And I've got to explain to the children, dear,
How he sleeps in two beds every night;
How he lies down at night in the one he calls "West",
Yet wakes in the "East" when it's light.

How this is because he's so tired at night,
He just drops off to sleep as he lies;
That he's picked up and tucked in his snug little bed,
By his Mamma who lives in the skies.

And I've got to excuse him for leaving the Earth,
Just because it gets dark and gray;
And not coming back till it's daylight again,
And the funny old moon slips away.

I sometimes believe, if he'd come back at night,
When the moon, with her full, happy face;
Has tempted the elfins to play on the grass,
And dance with their fairy-like grace,

He'd stay up all night, just to see the sweet
things
That happen while he is away;
And perhaps he would think, with the moon and
the stars,
It was twice as delightful as day.

But I mustn't be wasting my time with you here,
For it grieves me very sore;
To think what will come of the world, when I
Grow up and don't work any more.

BIRTHDAYS.

"MANY happy returns!"
How easy it is to say.
Yet if I do naught,
To further the thought,
In the days in between.
When deeds intervene,
What merit my wish today?

BIRTHDAY CANDLES.

I NOTE the symbol of the years:
The birthday candles—and my fears
Are stirred because—just *entre nous,*
The metaphor is all too true.
I know beyond the chance of doubt,
That sometime they'll be all burned out,
And I, one time so young and callow,
Will be at last a bit of tallow.
I feel that me, it well behooves,
To get outside accustomed grooves
And do, while yet my light shall shine,
Something suggesting the divine;
To plant, while yet 'tis not too late,
Some seed that shall perpetuate
The late lamented—that is: "Me",
(Excuse my grammar and agree,
That since it rhymes—in verse 'tis better
To save the spirit than the letter),
And so I fain would have you find
Some attribute of soul or mind,
That shall endure when marble shaft
Shall indicate that I've gone aft;
Or "jar" by loving garlands crated,
Shall tell that I have been cremated.
The biggest thing, as life I view
Is: Have I made a hit with you?
Has youth, enshrined in joyous graces,
Respect and love for wrinkled faces?
If this sweet joy I've come to see,
Then time may do his worst on me.

THANKSGIVING.

THANKSGIVING day is good to make us know,
How other people's joys to us can flow;
God gives us joys that to our friends belong,
And wakens in our hearts a grateful song.

A year ago our supplications rose,
That He would lessen other people's woes;
Or if He might not lessen them, that He
Would give them grace to bear them patiently,
While unto us His bounties should descend
Uninterruptedly unto the end.

And now upon this glad Thanksgiving day,
We're glad we conscientiously can say
That He has faithfully beside us stood
And in bestowing blessings has made good.
And thus we think that it is only fair
That we incorporate within our prayer
Such gratitude for his beneficence
As will encourage its continuance.

Meanwhile for friends who are less blessed than we,
We counsel patience and consistency;
To say one's burden has not greater grown,
Will compensate when happiness has flown.
If woe has been your penalty for sin,
Reflect upon how worse it might have been;
And most of all, bemoan not loss of gains,
But grateful be for what there still remains.

While we, so long as Heaven's skies are blue,
And gracious promises shall all come true,
Will bless these glad Thanksgiving days, and then
Devoutly and benignly say: "Amen."

WITH PHOTOS.

WELL, here's a health, old comrade.
'Tis a battle-scarred face I send.
But I hope you will retouch the wrinkles,
And discover the face of your friend.
The new world is in the saddle,
And moves to the front, apace;
But it knows no thrills more holy,
Than an old familiar face.

♣ ♣ ♣

"LEST we forget,"
Some pleasant charms and graces;
'Tis well to keep in mind,
Familiar faces.

♣ ♣ ♣

ANONYMOUS:
The hint is slim;
But if you guess it right,
Please think of him.

♣ ♣ ♣

THIS picture is an empty shell
Unless your thought shall shine,
And quicken it with love's own spell,
Then, it becomes divine.

♣ ♣ ♣

I SEND you this fleeting impression
That the camera caught of me;
With the wish of the sender
That some token tender,
May waken in memory.

♣ ♣ ♣

WE linger but a little while,
And then we are forgot;
I trust that while I'm here you will,
Forget me not.

EACH picture of a friend, to me
Time's message dear, indites;
A sort of blessed composite,
Of all that memory writes.
I wish my face may bring to mind,
Each thought that pleased you well,
And when the happy thoughts are writ,
There'll be no more to tell.

THE friends I hold within my heart,
Are on a golden wire strung;
The festoons making up each part,
With memories are hung.
I wish, for each friend so in mind,
Some one may think of me;
That I may likewise be enshrined,
Within his rosary.

WHEN other friends and other scenes
Have dimmed your thought of me;
When sorrow's touch and pain's demand
Have laid their hand on thee.
It may be then that through the mists
Of memory will shine
Some faces that have made you glad,
And you'll remember mine.

It may be that when far from home,
Some tender thought for thee
Shall make thee know the blessedness
Of human sympathy,
You'll wonder when you earned the right
To know this joy divine;
That gratitude will fill your heart
And you'll remember mine.

THE MAN OF THE HOUR.

THE man of the hour
Is the man of power,
The man who fights and achieves;
The world little cares,
For the man who despairs,
For the man who, defeated, grieves.

He may shrink from the strife
That threatens his life,
He may pray: "Let this cup pass from me,"
But no man is strong,
Who hesitates long,
To drink of adversity.

No time for relief;
No nursing of grief;
He has shown to the world his power,
Yet his only reward
Is the destiny hard,
To work till the very last hour.

Who made him erect?
Who made him elect
To stand, where another man falls?
God made him a man,
Bade him fight in the van,
Till the trumpet of victory calls.

Will he stand for the best?
Will he meet every test
That the genus of service demands?
Let him gird up his loins,
Mint his soul into coins,
Which humanity asks at his hands.

When he's through with it all,
Come death and the pall;
    His happiness then is begun;
For the verdict of time,
Cold and stern but — sublime,
    Will be writ on his tomb: "Well done."

BRIEFLETS HUMORESQUES
PARODIES

THE DOCTOR.

WHO is it comes when troubles brew?
Whom prize we most until they're through,
Yet most forget when bills are due?
The doctor.

Who is it with his healing art,
Takes almost all or any part,
Yet somehow saves the beating heart?
The doctor.

Who gives his life to kindly deeds,
Whose hand responds to human needs,
And who, the call of duty heeds?
The doctor.

TO A PREACHER.

I'VE listened to a preacher of the greatest fame;
Broad, deep and long the bases of his aim,
Ten minutes and he seemed to be inspired;
In twenty minutes every heart with zeal was fired;
Thirty minutes and I said, "This man must surely be a god";
In forty minutes, here and there a man began to nod;
In fifty minutes, men and charming ladies,
Had all agreed they'd rather be in Hades;
Sixty, seventy, eighty, every man with senses numb,
Bespoke some bolt from heaven to strike him dumb.

ON THE TRAIN.

HE, was a worldling I fancied,
She, was a maid, with blond hair;
The place was a railway carriage,
And what do you think happened there?
Two little simple conditions—
As simple, I think it is true;
As the parts of a seidlitz powder,
In their wrappers of white and blue.
She, couldn't open her window,
He, kindly lifted the sash;
Only a courtesy yet I was sure,
He was well under way with his mash.
He, had a railway folder,
She, wondered when she'd get home;
In a moment their heads were together,
Oh, I'm fearful the time has come,
When the parts of the seidlitz powder,
So innocent looking alone,
Must mingle themselves together,
But I'm helpless and now it is done.
So I lay my head back on the cushion,
And try if I can, to guess,
As I watch their delighted emotions,
How long they will effervesce.
Yet I envy them not their pleasure,
'Tis the way of the young and fair;
And I doubt if Heav'n's portals could offer,
More joy to that precious pair.

THE NEW YEAR.

January 1

This is the day when men eschew,
The baleful things they used to do.

January 2

Today they say with purpose strong,
"No power could tempt us to do wrong."

January 3

Today was wafted from afar,
The odor of a good cigar.

January 4

Today a man who did not know,
He had forsworn his old time foe

January 5

Suggested to him in a joke,
They match to see who'd buy the smoke.

January 6

"Today," he said, "To test my will
My pockets with cigars I'll fill."

January 7

"That man to stature great is grown,
Who smokes or lets the thing alone."

January 8

Today to soothe his blues and woes,
He puts one underneath his nose.

January 9

Today a friend, with kindest thought,
A box of fine Havanas bought.

January 10

While he, denying he'd repented,
And swearing he would not—consented.

A WOMAN AT THE BOTTOM OF IT.

A woman standing by a well,
By some misfortune slipped and fell;
As no one heard her cries and din,
Her life went out as she went in.
The troubled waters brackish grew,
Because they hid her out of view,
And straightway trouble came and fear,
To every one who sought its cheer;
The stones would cry, as some averred;
A ghost was seen; strange sounds were heard;
The oaken bucket famed of old,
Was covered with a deadly mold;
The chain with many breaks and slips,
Would cheat the waiting, thirsty lips;
Till one old man of prescience great,
Of language sage and mien sedate,
Said "Neighbors, I am firm impressed,
That when the cause for this is guessed,
There'll be, as sure as here I sit,
A woman at the bottom of it."

SANTA CLAUS.

SANTA CLAUS said in a bit of a pique:
"Holly and greens are all right as they go,
But there's one thing I never could stand for—
that is
Acorn on my mistletoe."

THE LADY BARBER.

OH the girl with the razor, the brush and the shears,
With her beautiful face and her nineteen years,
Has come in these fin die Siècle days,
To mellow the century's vanishing rays.
Her hand is so soft and her touch is so light,
Her blade is so keen and her eyes are so bright;
That I never complain if a moment be lost,
When standing beside me, her fair hands are crossed,
And the razor forgets as 'tis gently caressed,
That it has any mission except to be blessed,
And I am content as I look in her face,
At the poise of her head and her exquisite grace,
To let the world go and the things that annoy,
And believe for the moment there's nothing but joy.
She tells me of things that are new to my ears,
Of her fears and her aims and her hopes for the years,
And the things that had charmed me, I heard her aver,
Had brought their sweet comfort and blessing to her.
She told me how death with his pitiless power,
Had taken her loved ones away in an hour,
And I told her how, with his message of pain,
He had taken from me but the ripened grain.
And I looked on the face that with kindness was filled,
And listened to words that were crude and unskilled,
Yet somehow disclosed that the image divine
Was compassed within this unusual shrine.
I marveled how fate, as he went forth to sow,

With lives and not seeds the broad valleys to strow,
Should carelessly leave where no sunlight could find,
This wonderful being in darkness behind;
For I saw that the germ of a beautiful soul,
By the wayside had fallen and failed of its goal;
That the vigorous seed that had clamored for birth,
Had withered because it had no depth of earth,
While the one that had fallen by chance on good ground,
Forgot to give thanks for the good it had found.
But all things must end in this busy old world;
My face is clean shaven, my mustache is curled,
The finishing touches to collar and neck
Have all been completed, she hands me my check;
A pleasant good bye, a polite, call again,
And I know I've no warrant to longer remain.
Yet spite of my reason and sense, I'm half vexed,
When she says to the man who is waiting: "You're next."

A FAMILY REUNION.

IN the golden days of long ago,
There lived, to the joy of Creation;
A charming old lady, by name, mother Goose,
Whom the children all loved to elation.

Many stories she told of queer, funny folks,
And one day, so strange to relate;
These dear, funny people about whom she wrote,
All met round a bright burning grate.

The piper was there whose distinguished son Tom,
Had been charged with purloining a pig;
And while he explained, he amused them the while,
With a neat little song and a jig.

He said that the facts of that often told tale,
Very greatly distorted had been;
And even if true, that to steal just one pig,
Was not very much of a sin.

Humpty Dumpty declared and made oath to its truth,
By her dainty white gown and her yoke;
That the story of how she fell off of the wall,
Was only a newspaper joke.

The little old woman who lived in a shoe,
Insisted 'twas true, just the same;
But averred that she lived in a seven-room flat,
And to slander her so was a shame.

"'Twas another old woman who lived in a shoe,
My children would scorn such a charge;
At least if 'twas true it was long years ago;
Before they were nearly so large."

But little Jack Horner acknowledged the corn,
And said he would do it again;
And if only the pieman would furnish the pie,
He'd furnish the thumb and begin.

The little boy blue was wide awake now,
And he blew his horn loud and long;
And he laughed in great glee at his friend, Peter White,
Whose crooked nose led him awrong.

The man in the moon dropped in for a spell,
And the cow that jumped over the moon;
And the cat and the fiddle shook hands all around,
With the dish and the dog and the spoon.

Meantime old Mother Hubbard had gone to her cupboard,
And found just the daintiest food;
And she kissed them and blessed them and fed them well,
And bad them begone and be good.

Though 'twas less than a day that these sprites were away,
Yet the children had pined for them sore,
And they said: "'Please forgive us this time, little folks,
"And we'll never go there any more."

THE MOONSHINER.

THE moonshiner sat by his humble shed,
Smoking his pipe and drinking his fill;
When a revenue officer passed and said:
"With all of your faults, I love your still."

THE MOTHER OF VINEGAR.

A SMALL boy a bottle of vinegar found,
He wished it might run with him out on the ground;
But the vinegar said, as he shook it about:
"I can't 'cause my mother won't let me come out."

A DIVORCE.

THE white of an egg found life was a burden,
And marriage, she said, was no joke;
So she got a divorce, as a matter of course,
And that's how she threw off the yolk.

CUPID.

I made a trade with Cupid,
Upon a margin narrow;
I said: I'll cheat the little sweet,
Out of his bow and arrow.

He stripped me to the hide and said,
With feigned stupidity:
"Forgive, I pray, when I'm away,
'Twas my cupidity."

TO A BRIDE.

'TIS sweet to have a wife,
Yet such attachments
Disturb my mode of life,
And my abachments.

TO A GROOM.

'TIS sweet to be a bride,
Yet I'm afraid;
His love would not abide,
So I'm a maid.

THE FROG.

A FROG was struck with deadlly pain,
The doctor treated him in vain;
In spite of pills and kindly nurse,
The froggy's case grew daily worse;
Prayers for his soul the priest invoked,
And one sad day the froggy croaked.

THE CHEESE.

THE cheese was sailing the stormy waves,
His scent for danger strong;
He steered his whey, by the milky way.
When the skipper told him wrong.

EXCELSIOR.

THE shades of night were falling fast,
As through a western village past;
A scorching maid, her wheel astride,
And passing, in a shriek she cried:
Excelsior!

She did not see the big headlight,
Upon the railroad gleaming bright;
She bent her head upon the ground,
And said, but never looked around:
Excelsior!

Try not to pass, the old man said,
The train will mash your luckless head;
She missed by an inch and swore,
While closing gates her garments tore:
Excelsior!

Oh stay! a young man said and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast;
She only stopped to mend her tire,
Then murmured, climbing higher and higher:
Excelsior!

From happy homes the scent came nigh her,
Of beefsteak broiling on the fire,
And yet ahead there gleamed afar,
This motto like an evening star:
Excelsior!

She came to grief when going fast,
She struck a loaded van at last,
And as she breathed a silent prayer,
Her voice rang through the startled air:
Excelsior!

The maiden by a faithful cop,
From off her wheel was seen to hop;
She fled and only left for him,
Beside the rags and tire and rim:
Excelsior!

There in the twilight, cold and grey,
Lifeless but beautiful it lay;
He took it home to stuff his bed,
'Tis very good, indeed, he said:
Excelsior.

ABOU BEN EAT'EM.

ABOU Ben Eat'em, a cannibal of yore,
Awoke one night from dreams of gore,
And saw within the shadows of his walls,
Increasing there the darkness that appalls.
A devil writing in a book of fire—
A recent fast had roused Ben Eat'em's ire,
He said, with wrath, and held himself aloof:
What writest thou, thou fiend of cloven hoof?
The Presence turned, his words with scorn imbued:
The names of those who've raised the price of food.
And is mine one, the cannibal inquired?
The devil scanned the names of those he'd fired:
Not so, he said. Up spoke the doughty Ben:
Write me as one who loves his fellow men.

The devil wrote and fled mid lurid flames;
The next night came and wrote the butchers' names,
The names of those whose meats had been the best,
And Lo! Ben Eat'em's name led all the rest.

A CHIGGERETTE.

SEATED one day on the heather,
I was lazily taking my ease,
And the scent of my clear Havana,
Was wafted among the trees.

I know not what I was dreaming,
Nor the metres my thoughts ran in,
But something must have obtruded,
Beneath my tender skin.

As I sat in the golden twilight,
With a sense of infinite calm,
I little knew next morning,
How I'd wish for a soothing balm.

It wakened me out of my slumber,
This red and angry patch,
And the song of the festive Chigger,
Was condensed in the one word: "Scratch."

I sought, but I sought it vainly,
That microscopic tine,
That came from the soul of the chigger,
And entered into mine.

It may be that death's bright angel,
Will speak to me of the thing;
It may be that only in Heaven,
I'll rid me of its sting.

TWO fools there were; they were both in love;
Even as you and I;
The man he called her his pure, white dove,
And he said that even his lady's glove,
Was a thing that he valued than wealth above;
Even as you and I.

Oh the joy of our dreams is a joy that seems
As real as the ocean sand;
But 'tis fickle as well, as the ocean's swell,
And I wake at the dawn to find it is gone,
And I cannot understand.

And the lady fool she never could see,
Even as you and I,
That a thousand men were as brave as he;
That her nature and his could never agree;
And so they continued two fools to be;
Even as you and I.

Oh the time we lose and the bonds we fuse,
On our limbs like an iron band;
If you could but see what is plain to me,
And if I could but view what is patent to you,
Oh then, we would understand.

The woman he loved was silly and bland;
Even as you and I.
And the man was unworthy and hoped to land,
The lady's fortune, as well as her hand,
Yet neither could ever understand;
Even as you and I.

But out of the dross; of the pain and loss;
Sometimes, with hand in hand,
There emerge two fools, whom true love rules,
Who so happy are so, that they pray not to know,
And never to understand.

TO MR. RILEY.

IF I was rich as him, by gum!
I'd keep that billion loan to hum.
My kid he says, a meanin' Jim,
Th' aint any one as rich as him.
At any bank where wild thyme grows,
Jim's check is good fer all he owes,
An' kid he sez agin he bets,
A feller's rich 'at pays his debts.
In every home in boundless measure
He's got a store of buried treasure,
An' all his wealth he gives away
An' keeps it workin' every day.
If he should fly up in the air,
He'd find his "Ole Aunt Mary" there;
Er if he hunt the cold north pole,
He'd find the boys' "Ole swimmin' hole";
But Jim, the years is goin' fast,
An' every one may be the last
In spite of love and joy an' pelf,
So "Goodbye Jim—take keer yerself."

IF I had the strength to meet the calls,
That on the weakest of women falls,
To order the house with skillful hand,
And check-mate evil in servant land;
To smile in the face of the shadows near
Of the nameless ills I have learned to fear,
I think I should find that the strongest man
Would break 'neath the spell of the woman's plan,
Yet I might attain to its needs at length,
If I had the strength.

WHEN life was young and earth seemed full,
Of wealth and love and fame;
When every hilltop seemed a place whereon to
blaze my name;
When glory, like a guiding star, far up the moun-
tain-side,
Seemed saying, "Come, your restless feet still
higher may abide,"
I waited for no second call, but spurning staff and
guide,
I wrested e'en from Nature's face, her secrets, vast
and wide,
And every rock and every crag, I mounted, far or
near,
Bore, stamped in living characters, my name, the
day, the year.

In later years I learned he who would fame un-
dying find,
Must seek along the avenues of blessing human-
kind,
And so I climbed those heights again, buoyed with
a nobler hope,
Marked out my name and wrote instead, the praise
of "Ivory Soap."

BLUE BEARD.

WOULD'ST know the truthful history,
Of Blue Beard, famed of old?
You know the story well, of course,
The usual way 'tis told.
But ah, the truth would make you laugh,
Though woman, man or elf;
So here it is as told to me by Mrs. B. herself,
The truth is Blue Beard's living yet,
A hearty, hale, old man,
Because the last time Mrs. Beard
Unto the closet ran,
And dropped in fright the golden key
Upon the gory floor,
And stood in horror paralyzed
Before the open door.
Her waiting maid brought her,
What she said, was "Ivory Soap,"
A new compound, most marvelous;
With dirt and stains to cope.
With this she quickly cleaned the key,
And Blue Beard, having found,
A wife who was not curious (?),
With endless life was crowned.

ESTHER BROOK.

I KNOW a charming maiden,
Her name is Esther Brook;
Her steely glances pen-etrate,
Within my heart each nook.
However, my eyes behold her,
Most beautiful she seems;
And when my hands enfold her,
She fills my days and dreams.
Not gross is charming Esther,
And yet I sadly fear
A dozen dozen like her,
Would very gross appear.
She with her sweet suggestion,
My idle thought beguiles;
Her voice, the softest whisper,
Yet heard a hundred miles.
And oh, there's nothing sweeter,
Than when, in accents true,
Her words come through the ether,
"Yes, dearest, I love you."
The words of cheer from others,
Forgotten are, in part;
But hers are all recorded,
And filed within my heart.
And when she's absent from me,
I'd never smile again;
Without the messages of love,
From ESTHERBROOK'S STEEL PEN.

A CURE for bowlegs: soak them well,
Then lay them on a board, a spell;
With straps secure and draw them tight,
And when they dry, they'll be all right.

But should this too heroic be,
Unscrew the legs and change them, See?
And thus you'll change a bow leg'd son,
Into a handsome knock-kneed one.

But better still than either these,
To reconcile those sundered knees;
I'd recommend, with faith profound,
Paine's magic celery compound.

A MAN hath a score of pockets,
A maid but one;
Yet before I had found that pocket,
The day was done.

A maid hath a thousand fancies,
A man but one;
Yet the one overwhelmed the thousand,
When love begun.

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